

EXHIBIT 24

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StudiVZ - Massive Controversy Surrounds Facebook Rip-Off

November 15, 2006 — 04:05 PM PST — by [Pete Cashmore](#) —

Last month the Chinese Facebook rip-off [Xiaonei](#) got acquired, and now the German [Facebook](#) clone [StudiVZ](#) is making headlines. Piecing together the whole story is a tough job for those who don't speak German, but it seems like the story has been brewing for some time, with server performance, PR blunders and privacy issues ranking high among the problems at the young startup. Today the stories made their way to the press, with an appearance in [Spiegel Online](#), among others. The story that's making the biggest headlines, however, seems to be a birthday party invitation sent out by founder Ehssan Dariani, which was designed to look like the Nazi's propaganda newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*. This was intended to be a joke, but many German bloggers didn't see it that way. Controversy also came from a [YouTube video](#) that allegedly shows Ehssan Dariani making sexist remarks to women on the subway.



Launched in October 2005 by students in Berlin, StudiVZ's story is an interesting one. With 1 million members from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and other German speaking countries - up from 800,000 in October - they've certainly got some traction. They've even expanded to other countries like France, Poland, Italy and Spain, and have funding from the founders of the ringtone company Jamba, which was acquired by [News Corp](#) in September. StudiVZ's original seed funding, meanwhile, came from the founders of [Spreadshirt](#) - Ehssan worked there as an intern. Further investment came from Holtzbrinck Venture Capital - the investment is rumored to be in the region of 10 or 12 million Euros, although this is strongly refuted by the site's founders.

Some of the controversy swirls around the fact that StudiVZ is a blatant Facebook clone, with an identical interface, some graphics that share their names with Facebook (some are suggesting they were copied) and error messages that include the phrase "fakebook". That said, the Facebook team have met up with StudiVZ, and they don't appear to be considering legal action - there were even unsubstantiated rumors that Facebook might buy the German site. It's more likely, however, that a portal would snap them up.

That just scratches the surface of the controversy, however, and there's a lengthy English explanation [here](#). In short, StudiVZ is the hot topic of discussion among German weblogs at the moment, seemingly bigger than the controversy that surrounded [Facebook's news feed](#) feature and their decision to [open up](#) the site to everyone.



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